

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 03002 120433Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01
/062 W

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R 111418Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3054
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3002

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SY PINR
SUBJ: INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: LATEST INTERNAL DISTURBANCES HAVE INCLUDED
ASSASSINATION OF PROMINENT ALAWITE PROFESSOR AT ALEPPO
UNIVERSITY WEEKEND APRIL 30-MAY 1 AND CLASH BETWEEN RIVAL
ALAWITE FAMILIES IN QIRDAHA, PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD'S HOME VILLAGE,
WHICH PRESIDENT'S BROTHER RIF'AT SUCCEEDING IN RESOLVING.
END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE RECEIVED FAIRLY DETAILED ACCOUNT OF ASSASSINATION
OF PROMINENT ALAWITE PROFESSOR AT ALEPPO UNIVERSITY WHO
WAS KILLED WEEUEND OF APRIL 30-MAY 1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR WAS
TOLD BY ONE OF HIS REGULAR CONTACTS IN ALEPPO THAT VICTIM
SHOT ONCE IN NECK AND ONCE IN FACE BY MAN ON A BICYCLE WHO
MANAGED TO ESCAPE. SOURCE PINNED BLAME ON SUNNIS
OPPONENTS OF REGIME, AND ASSERTED THAT IF IRAQIS
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INVOLVED AT ALL, IT PROBABLY ONLY TO EXTENT OF SUPPORTING
SUNNI PERPETRATORS WITH PROMISE OF SAFEHAVEN. DAMASCUS
BISHOP CONFIRMED INCIDENT TO US AND ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD
VICTIM HAD BEEN SELECTED TO SUCCEED DR MUHAMMAD AL-FADIL
AS RECTOR OF DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY.

3. RECENTLY WE HAVE MANAGED TO OBTAIN DETAILS OF DISTURBANCE

IN QIRDAHA, HOME VILLAGE OF AL-ASSAD FAMILY, WHICH OCCURRED ABOUT ONE MONTH AGO. ACCORDING TO REGULAR SOURCE IN CONTACT WITH SENIOR OFFICER OF RIF-AT AL-ASSAD'S DEFENSE COMPANIES, SOME FAMILIES FROM QIRDAHA CLOSELY ALLIED WITH ASSAD FAMILY REGULARLY LOOT ITEMS STORED AT TARTUS PORT WITH ASSISTANCE FROM PORT OFFICIALS. CONTRABAND GOODS THEN SOLD IN MARKETS OF COASTAL CITIES. OTHER QIRDAHA CLAN NOT COUNTED AMONG ASSAD SUPPORTERS TRIED TO COMPETE IN THIS THIEVERY AND FIGHTING BROKE OUT BETWEEN TWO RIVAL GROUPS. RIF'AT AND SOME OF HIS OFFICERS WERE DISPATCHED TO QIRDAHA TO RECONCILE CLANS, AND THROUGH DISPENSATION OF FUNDS AND PROMISE OF GOVERNMENT POSITIONS FOR RIVAL GROUP FURTHER BLOODSHED WAS AVERTED.

4. SAME SOURCE SAID THAT RIF'AT HAD NOT MANAGED TO REGAIN LOYALTY OF HIS TROOPS TO EXTENT HE HAD ENJOYED IT PRIOR TO INCIDENT INVOLVING SALE OF LAND WHICH RIF'AT HAD PROMISED TO HIS OFFICERS FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL GAIN. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, SQUABBLING AMONG OFFICERS IN VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE DEFENSE COMPANIES CONTINUES.

5. COMMENT: LAST REPORTED ALAWITE ASSASSINATION WE AWARE OF OCCURRED APRIL 15, AND UNTIL WE RECEIVED DETAILS OF ALEPPO INCIDENT WE THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT SELECTIVE ASSASSINATIONS OF ALAWITES HAD TAPERED OFF. IF IT IS TRUE THAT VICTIM INDEED SLOTTED TO REPLACE DR AL-FADIL, THE KILLING HAS IMPORTANCE BOTH FOR ITS SYMBOLIC IMPACT AND ASSUMPTION THAT CIVTIM HELD IN ESTEEM BY ALAWITE COMMUNITY. AS FOR QIRDAHA INCIDENT, IT CONFIDENTIAL

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SERVES AS REMINDER THAT CLAN POLITICS STILL DOMINATE INTRA-ALAWITE RELATIONS AND AL-ASSAD MUST DEVOTE CONSIDERABLE TIME TENDING HIS ALAWITE CONSTITUENCY.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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